

Wednesday, February 22, 2023

Regarding selection of the ombudsman as described in Raised Bill No. 6699:

The position should not be appointed by the Governor, nor should it reside within CT DCP.

DCP has a documented history of failing patients in the medical cannabis program. A few examples:

<https://www.ctinsider.com/news/article/Connecticut-raises-mold-levels-for-medical-16678474.php>

<https://grownin.com/2022/03/22/ct-doubles-down-on-mold-and-yeast-content-regulation-change/>

<https://www.wfsb.com/2023/02/13/medical-marijuana-patients-struggle-find-supply-after-recreational-launch-ct/>

In the interest of checks and balances, the office of the ombudsman should reside within a different agency. It is outside the scope of this testimony to recommend a specific agency.

Further, the ombudsman should be fully and completely divested of any direct or indirect financial interest in the cannabis industry, regulated or unregulated, for the duration of their tenure in the role.

Choosing a patient ombudsman is an important decision that requires a fair and equitable process to ensure that the best candidate is selected. Here are some steps that could be taken to ensure a fair and equitable process:

Define the qualifications and responsibilities of the patient ombudsman: Before starting the selection process, it is important to define the qualifications and responsibilities of the patient ombudsman. This should include any specific skills, education, or experience required for the role, as well as the specific responsibilities that the patient ombudsman will have.

Advertise the position widely: The position of the patient ombudsman should be advertised widely to attract a diverse range of candidates. This can be done through job boards, social media, and other relevant channels.

Use a selection committee: A selection committee can be appointed to oversee the selection process. The committee should be diverse and include representatives from different stakeholder groups, including patients, healthcare providers, and administrators.

Establish a fair screening process: A fair and transparent screening process should be established to ensure that all candidates are evaluated objectively. This can include reviewing resumes and conducting interviews.

Conduct a thorough background check: A thorough background check should be conducted on all final candidates to ensure that they have the appropriate qualifications and experience for the role.

Make the final decision based on merit: The final decision should be based on the candidate's qualifications, experience, and suitability for the role. The selection committee should ensure that the decision is fair and unbiased, and that the selected candidate is the best fit for the role.

Provide training and support: Once the patient ombudsman is selected, they should be provided with training and support to ensure that they are able to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

Overall, a fair and equitable process for choosing a patient ombudsman should be transparent, objective, and focused on selecting the best candidate for the role.

Respectfully,

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